



theme: Salvation #1 – In Tha House
materials: Bibles, song 40 by U2

welcome

What is your greatest fear? Is there any situation that could legitimately happen to you that causes you great fear and anxiety? Have you ever feared for your life?

interact

Have everyone turn to Psalm 40 and read it through on their own. (If you can get the song 40 by U2 to play while people are doing this, so much the better.)
Read it through slowly once, twice, three times if you want. What stands out to you? How does the writer bring his fears to God, and what does he expect of God?
How do you bring your fears to God, and what do you expect? Share these things with the group.
Then try something together: Have everyone put their hands over their ears, close their eyes, and sing a song to God. Each person should just sing their own unique song to God, but everyone should sing at the same time. It doesn't matter if you can sing or not, because everyone is covering their ears and singing their own song. You can make it up if they want, or can use a song you know. Give this song to God as a gift of worship, and as an acknowledgement that He does hear us when we bring our troubles to Him.

read

Read Psalm 27 together.
Reading this passage, what do you think the writer meant by "salvation"?
What did he want to be saved from? What are his enemies wanting to do to him, and what does he want God to do?
How (if at all) is this different from the "salvation" Christians often talk about?
What is usually meant now by the term "salvation"?
Does the writer seem completely confident that the Lord will save him? (Compare verse 9 with verse 13).
Why would he be worried that the Lord might reject him?
Do you ever worry about being rejected by God? Why or why not?
Are you confident that you will see the goodness of God in the land of the living? Or are you waiting to see God's goodness in heaven?
What is the writer's greatest desire in this passage?
Why would he want to spend all his days in the house of the Lord? Why would he feel safe (saved) there?
What might that mean for us now? Should we want to spend every day locked up in Church?

think

Think about this passage in terms of people around the world who are threatened by warfare all around them, whose daily lives are fraught with great uncertainty and fear. What might God's salvation look like for them?
How can your cell learn about the conditions of people living in war-torn areas around the world, and how can you pray for them and act on their behalf?



live & pray

What situation in your life is causing you fear right now? Take it every day to the Lord in prayer, and repeat verse 14 as an act of faith: "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart, and wait for the LORD."

useful resources

Movie: Invisible Children
Movie: Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace
CD: *Chants of the Taizé Community*, by the Cambridge Jubilate Deo Singers

leader's guide

Salvation here means being rescued from death, foes, trouble and slander. The writer's enemies want to slander him at the best, injure or kill him at the worst. The writer is trusting that God will protect him from false witnesses and from his foes.

Salvation has often come to mean "becoming a Christian and getting into heaven" in our day and age. It has little to do with the present world, much to do with the afterlife. A scriptural view of salvation would seem to have a lot more to do with life here and now, with protection, with conversion of lifestyle, with seeing God at work in the land of the living.

There is a tension in this passage, as in many of the Psalms, with the writer declaring his utter trust in God, while in the same Psalm begging God not to let him down, or wondering if God was even hearing his prayer. There is a rawness and reality to this tension that can be very helpful to our understanding of our relationship with God. We can be honest that we do encounter doubts, that we do get scared, that we do wonder if God has rejected us or if He hears our prayers, that we sometimes do feel alone. At the same time, we can declare in faith that God is listening and that He is good and that He will save us. This faith is a deeper and stronger bedrock than our feelings about God.

The writer desires to spend all his days in the house of the Lord, seeking his face. The house of the Lord would be the centre of his strength, his place of refuge, because God himself was his light and salvation. So he would be safer in the presence of God than surrounded by his armies. It is a recognition of where salvation lies – not in human strength, but in the strength of God.